



CHAPTER TWO

Setting the Stage for Success

During this phase of a project, planning and design staff from local agencies are likely to be working with WSDOT's local program staff, project development engineers, and assistant state design engineers. In many regions the Local Programs Engineer may facilitate coordination of projects that involve both local agencies and WSDOT¹. Together, the two lead agencies of the project should:



If you work for WSDOT, you will recognize the following concepts from the Managing Project Delivery process that has been adopted throughout the Department and incorporated in the *Design Manual*, Chapter 140. Even if you don't work for WSDOT, the training and participant manual on Managing Project Delivery is an excellent resource for putting project teams together and overall project management.

As in Managing Project Delivery, the principles outlined in this *Guidebook* should be ones that you scale up or down depending on the size and complexity of your project. A major arterial improvement project, for example, will require a larger team and a greater degree of coordination than an isolated signal installation. The idea, though, is to create a team and a working struc-

¹ Except in Northwest Region as noted in the previous chapter where projects are coordinated with local agencies through Area Administrators

photo Rita Robinson, DCTED



▲ Joint projects can involve several different modes of transportation, such as this bicycle/ferry connection.

ture that incorporates the concerns, values, and ideas of all of the project's stakeholders.

How do you know what you'll need?

Not all joint projects need to take advantage of all of the team and project management principles outlined in this *Guidebook*. However, for any projects along a state route or intersection that may affect a state route it's best to get WSDOT and possibly even FHWA involved. The table on the following page will help you evaluate your needs.

Start with the right team

This is the core element of success or failure. The right people are fundamental to a project's success. All members of the project team need to serve as the central group of project advocates; people who are firmly committed to ensuring that the project process will be managed effectively and that the project itself will

Joint Project Type	Questions to Ask	Project Needs
Signalization of a single intersection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does it have a significant impact on businesses? 2. Is human safety an issue? 	If yes to either: you probably don't need a large project team, and you probably don't need a highly-structured project management plan. <u>Do</u> keep the community and all affected business owners informed of your plans, however.
HOV Direct Access Lanes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will traffic patterns in surrounding areas be affected? 2. Will commuters be interested in this proposed change? 	If yes to either: assemble a project team of local jurisdiction and key transportation agencies (including FHWA and transit). May not require an expert panel, but <u>will</u> require strong project management, communication, and consensus on a final alternative. You'll need to implement an effective communications strategy with your key user groups.
Downtown Revitalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the downtown streets closely linked to a state highway? 2. Is this part of a comprehensive plan and/or a community visioning process? 	If yes to either: the expert panel is highly recommended. You'll need a diverse project team, strong project management, flexibility, and a commitment to achieve consensus. The tools presented here will serve you well.
Major Corridor Improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the widest range of potential impact/improvement? 	These are the largest, and most complex joint projects. Plan for a <u>large</u> project team, <u>significant</u> public involvement, and an <u>intense</u> process. You'll need all the tools this <i>Guidebook</i> has to offer.

be delivered according to the highest possible standards.

The **project team** should be made up of representatives of the jurisdictions who are directly involved in planning for, implementing, or eventually living with the results of the identified project. For most joint projects, this means that you will include planners, designers, architects and engineers from the local community—usually a department of a county or city government. WSDOT representatives generally include project development engineers, region traffic engineers and assistant state design engineers, planners, environmental, and other staff depending on the type of project from your WSDOT regional office. If federal highway dollars are involved, then a representative from FHWA may also need to be

involved on the team. And, don't forget transit staff if the route also has transit service.

Some projects include either a public or private developer, for example, a port district, a university, or a private real estate interest. If the project affects a tribal government then tribal authorities should have a role to play on your project. Representatives from those entities should also be included as part of the project team.

Of course, not all projects are large enough to warrant a large project team; you'll need to make the determination of the size and appropriate composition for your team. The team shouldn't be so large that it is unwieldy to manage. On the other hand, it needs to include the full range of interests and perspectives that should be ad-

dressed through the project. A team size of 6-10 is generally ideal.

Whatever the size of your team, all members need to be empowered to make decisions for their organizations. The team simply won't function effectively if there are varying degrees of authority represented among members. Make sure that you are assembling a group that can function as peers with each other. Of course, other formal organizational approvals need to occur, but begin with a team of individuals who have the right amount of authority to move the project along. It may be important to emphasize that part of a team member's responsibility is to keep his or her organization informed.

Your Team Needs:

- The right people
- Empowered people
- Enthusiastic project advocates

Sometimes an executive steering committee can be an important and helpful addition to the project. Members of this committee are most likely to be elected officials, agency heads, or other individuals in positions of authority. They will not meet as often as the project team and they will not delve into the nitty-gritty details of project management. What they will do is keep the project on-track politically, working with each other and other political bodies to ensure the project continues with the funding and other political support it needs to be completed. Not all projects are this complicated or highly visible, but when they are, this steering committee can be a crucial component of success.

Start the Team Off on the Right Foot

Once your team is assembled, you need to schedule at least three meetings to create a vision and to organize your team effectively to carry out the project. The next few pages detail how these meetings should be carried out.

If the project is a large one, and especially if it involves a strong community vision as may have been outlined in a comprehensive plan, it can be helpful to bring in some outside expertise to initi-

photo Link Transit, Wenatchee



▲ Many projects also consider transit in their design.

ate your project. You can use this expert panel to help evaluate the multitude of ideas, concepts, and dreams that are often generated when a community gets excited about its future.

Helpful Expertise:

- Transportation engineer
- Architect or landscape architect
- Community planner
- Economic development advisor
- Professional facilitator

There may be grant funding and other assistance available for this kind of visioning process, and your project team should take advantage of these sources of funds. In selecting your expert panel, you will also want to choose individuals who are unbiased and good at encouraging discussion so that everyone on the project team can fully participate in the visioning process. Expertise that can be helpful in setting the stage for joint projects include:

- (1) **A Transportation Engineer.** Since most projects are driven by transportation needs, the engineer on your team will be critical to your success. Select an engineer who can bring broad perspective, technical knowledge, and problem solving abilities to the table. This individual can serve as your engineering moderator, allowing the engineer members of the team to fully participate in all team discussions. The engineer will be able to

photo courtesy Connie Lovelady



▲ Sleater-Kinney bicycle tunnel, Lacey.

identify project needs, such as the level of access depending on the function of the roadway, which should be determined early. Addressing issues such as this early in a project will help to avoid long and costly delays later on. And your engineer will help the team identify these important project elements.

- (2) **An Architect or Landscape Architect.** If the project has any association with quality of life characteristics in the community, it is important to engage the services of an architect, even if you only use that professional for a few meetings. Depending on the project needs, this individual may be from the project team, or a third party who can act as a visioning moderator, allowing architects on your team to fully participate, rather than facilitate, the team discussions. It can also be helpful to engage the services of someone who has “been there before” and understands the concepts of community partnership, or CSD. These professionals can often suggest innovations that the group may not think up on its own. Especially at this early stage, the energy and experiences of an outside design professional can help set the broader framework for project success.

- (3) **A Community Planner.** Community planners bring the experience of translating comprehensive plan policies to project goals and objectives. They are tuned in to communities’ land use and economic needs, and can translate community expectations to criteria for project development. Planners are helpful in creating both short and long-term visions for the team. They can also serve as guides to address compatibility issues of the new facility. If the project is along a state route, the type and level of access must be determined early in the proposals life. Your planner can help identify the local political issues that may come up related to hot issues such as access management or control. Again, the planner may be either a team member or an outside expert.

- (4) **An Economic Development Advisor.** As you start exploring the details of your project you are likely to find out that there will be economic development impacts associated with your plans. An expert in economic development, especially as it relates to transportation corridors and “Main Street” interactions, can be a useful addition to your team for this kind of discussion and planning.

- (5) **A Professional Facilitator.** You may eventually decide that you don’t need a facilitator for every meeting, and that’s fine. For these three early ones, however, the investment in a neutral, outside professional will be well worth it. It will be this person’s task to make sure that everyone at the table is participating fully and that all perspectives are being heard and respected on an equal footing. This individual can also probe and facilitate the group through any areas of dissension and will be instrumental in helping the group understand the project issues, goals, and next steps in the process.



Key Concept

Strong Project Advocacy

Meeting One *Laying It All Out on the Table*

The first team meeting should have a broad agenda—this is a chance for everyone to lay out all visions, goals, issues, concerns, and priorities. Then it's up to the team to work through these over the long term to ultimately make the project successful.

Questions to Ask:

1. What does this project need to do for us?
2. What will stand in our way?
3. What can we learn from the past?

At this first meeting, the team will also create the big picture of how their project will be developed, from the planning phase to the construction phase. For joint projects, this partnership begins as early as possible and continues through construction.

A chart of the partnership project flow is presented in *Figure 3*. Notice that very important decisions are accomplished and documented during the planning phase. The identification of “Level-of-Service criteria” and “critical design issues” goes hand-in-hand with the documentation of project objectives and project definition.

Question One: What does this project need to do for us?

If you've assembled the right team, the answers are likely to range across the board, from goals of mobility to safety, economic vitality, bike facilities, transit needs, railroad crossings, and aesthetics. Think big at this point and remember that there are no wrong answers. Members of the entire project team should feel free to articulate their goals and visions for the project.

Remember that all projects exist within an overall planning framework. Understanding that is key to defining the purpose of the project and outlining the goals you need to accomplish. State law

requires all projects developed by both state and local government to be consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans. These plans then will help to set the project into the context of its location. This context will not only help to define the project, but also to constrain the range of alternatives. As you can see, any solution developed then must fit into the overall transportation network, the overall land development strategy

Hearing each other's perspectives at this first meeting will help you create a framework for “thinking outside the box” as you move ahead.



photo Brian Hunter

▲ These sidewalk enhancements were part of downtown Kennewick's Revitalization Plan.

and needs to be compatible with the surrounding community. Comprehensive plans serve as a starting point for defining these elements.

Question Two: What will stand in our way?

It's good to anticipate all possible hurdles as early as possible in the process. By identifying them up front, you can build time into the project to work through and deal with difficult issues. Here are some of the concerns that are typical to a number of projects:

- ▶ **Funding:** where will it come from, how will it ultimately be obtained and coordinated, who will determine constraints on how various funding sources can be spent?
- ▶ **Permitting:** what laws or regulations will apply to the project, what permits are necessary, and what organizations will need to review and grant those permits? This will not only identify requirements that will guide the project but it will also identify procedural requirements that will govern the process. Understanding the permitting needs will also identify who needs to be at the table. Involving or notifying permitting agencies early in the process can help build relationships that will be very valuable in project permitting.
- ▶ **WSDOT review:** what will it entail, how will it be scheduled, and how will that schedule be adhered to? Who has final say so on comments?
- ▶ **Consultant response and recommendation:** How will any project consultants respond to comments by FHWA, WSDOT, or local agencies in ongoing work activities. How will disagreements be handled? How will changes be incorporated into plans? How will communication with consultants occur?
- ▶ **Local review and approval:** How can the team be assured that each jurisdiction will respond with one voice? Could a higher political body overrule a team decision? What can the team do to avoid these kinds of surprises?
- ▶ **Document quality:** what are the expectations for the quality of submittals, and does everyone understand them?

- ▶ **Conflicting goals:** Can we possibly incorporate all of the goals, values, and visions that have been stated for this project? How will local access needs be addressed?

Again, work at this first meeting to make your barrier list as comprehensive as possible. The earlier you define these concerns, the better able you will be to deal with them as they come up on the project. Later on you will be refining this list and developing a schedule to effectively handle the barriers you have identified.

Question Three: What can we learn from the past?

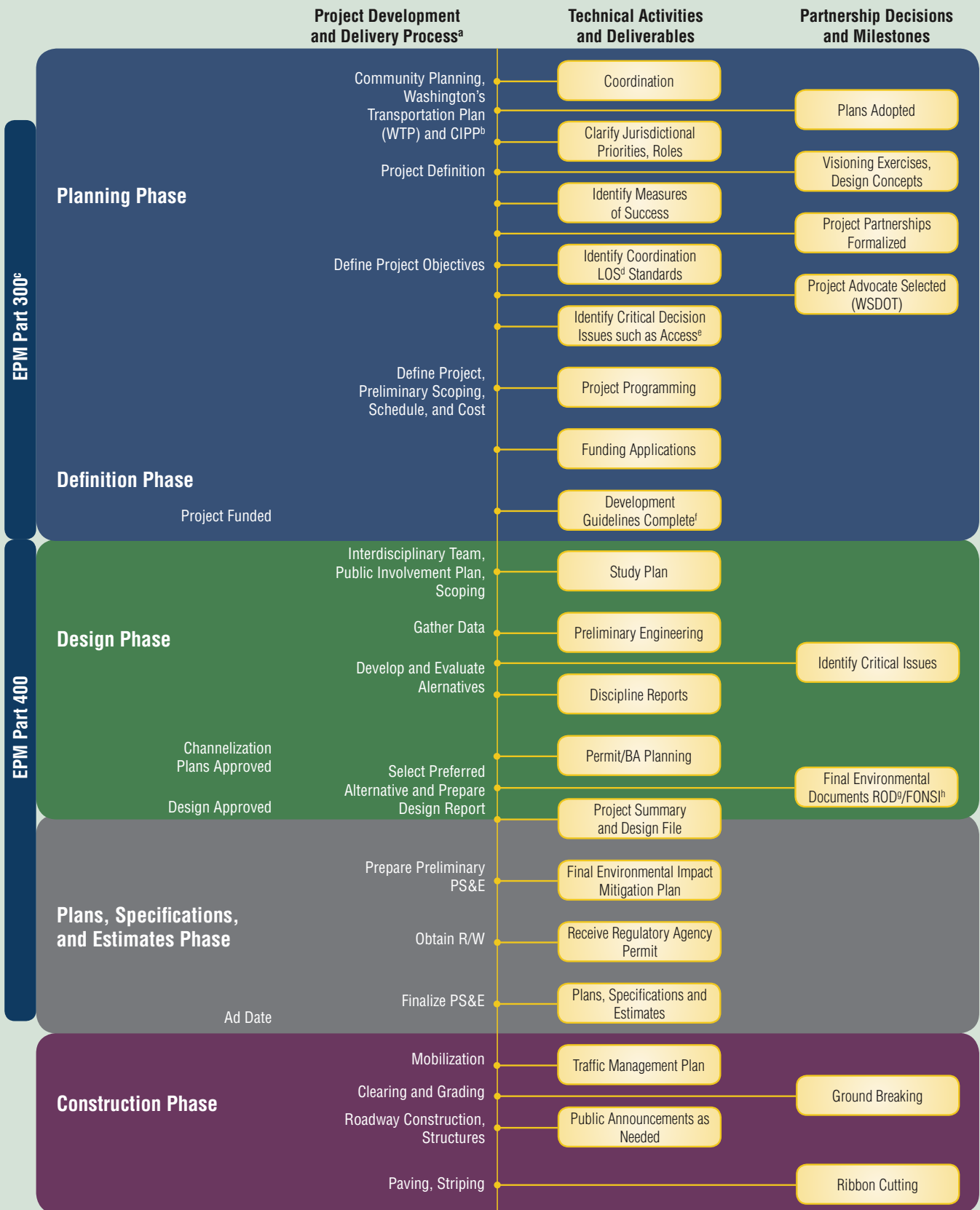
Chances are this is not the first time your community or agency has engaged in a project with WSDOT and/or other partners. Whether it was a positive or a negative experience, it is important to take the time to learn from your history.

- ▶ What has gone well between the partnering agencies, and what hasn't worked so well?
- ▶ What successes do you hope to replicate, and what failures do you want to avoid?

Take the time to clear the air—or remind yourselves of past successful efforts—at this first meeting. Again, by identifying these issues up front you can then develop a plan of action for addressing and working through them as you proceed with your project.

At the end of this first meeting, ask the facilitator to take all of the shared information and create a schedule and plan for the group's interactions together. Obviously you will not deal with all of the issues you have outlined right away; a good facilitator can lay out a schedule, however, that will enable you to address these issues as appropriate throughout your project.

Figure 7. Project Flow Chart



^aWSDOT Managing Project Delivery Process initiated.

^bCapital Improvement Preservation Program.

^cEnvironmental Procedures Manual (M 31-11).

^dLevel of Service

^eAccess Issues

^fShould include Environmental Review Summary and Draft and Final Project Definition at this phase.

^gRecord of Decision

^hFinding of No Significant Impact



photo Susan Kempf,
CTED Mainstreet Program Manager

▲ *Downtown Chelan. Shown above are examples of transportation features that enhance downtowns: adequate customer parking, pedestrian-oriented lighting, visual appeal, and bicycle racks. Note: This is a local city street. Not all elements seen here would be appropriate on some state highways. Consult your WSDOT region traffic engineer.*



The goal of this meeting is to better define project goals and vision. If appropriate, this is a good time to feature the expert panel you have convened earlier. You should leave the meeting with a solid draft of a project description that clearly details what you are trying to achieve.

Questions to Ask	
1.	Competing or complementary goals?
2.	Satisfied with project description and next steps?
3.	Key elements of team operating agreement?

Question One: Do we have competing or complementary goals?

Between the first and second meetings, the engineer and architect should have spent some time discussing the goals and visions you outlined during your brainstorming session. While they will not come back to you with “answers,” they should be able to return with a sense of how your goals might compete with or complement each another.

Ask your expert panel to come to this meeting with a draft project definition for your team, indicating where they believe the goals or visions may not work together and where they can be successfully accommodated. This draft project definition should then be reviewed and revised by the team at this meeting. This is where experience and innovation will be particularly helpful. In the past, communities and WSDOT have often believed that designs tended towards reduced liability rather than increased livability. And, for some projects it may be that the two have not been compatible. However, a number of successful projects throughout Washington are tributes to the notion that often compromise can be reached. These two goals, and others like them, don’t necessarily have to be mutually exclusive.

Question Two: Are we satisfied with our project description, and what are our next steps?

As a team, you may be able to reach consensus on your project description at this meeting. Or, you may need more time to work through it together. Whatever the case, this is the time to determine your next steps and schedule: whether you devote more meetings to a project description or proceed with the actual project work itself.



Question Three: What are the key elements of our team operating agreement?

One of the most important tasks in these early meetings is to sign off on a team agreement that clearly defines your expectations for each other, your operating parameters, and the ways in which you will define success at the end of the project. A sample of a team agreement is provided in *Figure 8*. This is a crucial document, because you will use it to periodically evaluate your work together throughout the course of the project. It requires considerable thought. You are creating a truly meaningful agreement that will keep you on track as a group and promote accountability in your performance with each other.

- ✓ **Who's in charge?** While all members of the team need to be strong advocates for the project, a single individual should be designated as the team leader. For community-initiated projects, this may be a consultant. It is that individual's job to schedule meetings, keep the project on track, secure funding sources, and shepherd the project through the WSDOT/FHWA review and approval process. Make sure to clearly identify who has accountability for these tasks.
- ✓ **What are your operating parameters?** These are just a few examples of the parameters you will want to establish at the outset.
 - ▶ How often will you meet, where, and when?
 - ▶ Will a project team member run the meetings or will you use a facilitator?
 - ▶ How will you make decisions together—through full consensus, modified consensus, voting?
 - ▶ Which decisions will be based on team consensus versus others that will involve collaborative problem-solving but will ultimately be the decision of a particular agency?
 - ▶ If a project team member cannot attend a meeting, are substitutes allowed?

- ▶ What options or resources are available to members with dissenting opinions?

- ✓ **How will you hold yourselves accountable?** Team frustration often brews when members do not follow through on their commitments to each other. The team member with authority to move the project through a review process, for example, needs to clearly identify to the other members which documents are required for review, what the expectations are for document content and format, how long the review will take, and what it will include. How will the local agency or consultant respond to the review? Members who are reporting to local political bodies should make it clear when and how approvals will occur. If the schedule is going to be delayed for some reason, then that delay also needs to be clearly communicated to the team. These are just a few examples of how you might hold yourselves accountable to the full team. Take the time as a group to list all of the ways in which you want each other to perform in terms of communication, scheduling, and project deliverables.
- ✓ **How will you define project success?** Two, three, or ten years down the road—what will a “successful” project look like? You can use your project description to get a start on this, but make sure you expand, if necessary, to include all of your ideas on how the project will ultimately function and be successful—for FHWA, WSDOT, and the local community. This will be the yardstick you will use later on to measure your work together.
- ✓ **How will you define process success?** Projects may ultimately be built but leave behind a team that has not functioned well together, along with a trail of frustration, bad feelings, and jurisdictional divides. Detail, as a team, how you will measure the success of your teamwork at regular intervals throughout the process. As you move through the project you will use this tool to periodically evaluate how you are doing and adjust where necessary to improve your work together.

Figure 8: Sample Team Agreement

Team Agreement

On _____, the _____ project team agreed to the following:
(date) (name of project)

We are working together to design and ultimately build the _____ project.
(name of project)

Our project definition, including the way in which we will measure this project's successfulness, is attached to this agreement.

Our Team's Process

_____ has agreed to be our team leader for the duration of the project.
(name of team leader)

In this role, _____ will perform the following tasks:

- Schedule and notify the team of all meetings.
- Oversee the project schedule and hold team members accountable for their completion of key tasks.
- Ensure that funding sources can be obtained.
- Act as a champion for the project within WSDOT, with the local community, and other funding authorities.
- Ensure that the project team has the outside resources to complete the project on time and within budget.

As a team, we have agreed to the following operating parameters:

- We will meet every (week/month/quarter) throughout the duration of the project.
- We will reach decisions through the following mechanisms (specify voting, consensus, or modified full consensus).
- We will be accountable to each other by performing all tasks accurately and on time, realizing that other team members are depending on our performance in order to make the project successful. We agree that we will develop project elements based on the standards and policy the team has identified.
- We will communicate openly about all aspects of the project, understanding where we have disagreements and working to find mutually-acceptable solutions to those agreements. We agree to act as a team in a spirit of collaboration and with active and open listening.
- We will provide for both timely and accurate submittals and reviews of all work associated with the project in order to ensure that the project can move forward in a reasonable and cost-effective timeframe. When we cannot meet a submittal or review schedule, we will notify other team members of the delay and of the reasons for that delay. We will mutually decide what schedule changes are necessary.
- We will document all decisions and milestones reached on the project, so that if and when those decisions are reviewed by other divisions of the involved agencies, there is consistency in terms of the communications related to the project.

Our Project

We agree to the following related to our project's planning, design, and construction requirements:

- We will not deem the project "successful" until we have met all of the goals and objectives outlined in our project description.
- We will seek to actively engage the public throughout the project, so that we are aware of and incorporate community values, goals, and priorities. We will also clearly communicate how public feedback has influenced project decisions.
- We will work collaboratively to ensure that the project is designed and constructed within the specified budget and timeframe.

Project Description

The Problem We Are Trying to Solve

The City of Ecotopia, population 30,000, sits on the edge of Puget Sound. State Route 775 crosses through the city and connects with a Washington State Ferry Terminal. The terminal is a busy one, with 40 boat crossings per day.

The state highway effectively divides the city in two, as it traverses directly through the heart of the downtown area. It isolates the major downtown core from the city's waterfront area. There is no pedestrian access linking the downtown with the waterfront area, which includes a marina, shops, a promenade, and several art galleries. Compounding the problem is a Burlington Northern rail line, which also serves as a formidable barrier between the downtown and the waterfront area. There are no pedestrian crossings that allow for passage across the tracks; bicyclists and pedestrians need to wait at the train signal and then cross the tracks along with vehicular traffic.

The state highway and ferry terminal waiting area are inadequate to meet WSDOT's needs. During summer months the entire vehicular holding area quickly becomes filled, resulting in long lines of traffic backed up and parked on the state highway. In addition to safety concerns, this situation has resulted in a substantial increase in air pollution throughout the surrounding neighborhoods.

In its comprehensive planning process, the City of Ecotopia set as its visioning goal the notion of being a "destination city" noted for its art galleries and waterfront. An improved link to the downtown area is crucial to this vision and to the overall economic vitality of the city. Ecotopia residents are also pressing for this link, as it would improve their overall quality of life in the city.

WSDOT also needs to improve the situation as the current holding area and resulting traffic backups are both intolerable and unsafe for motorists. The agency has a cost estimate in its Highway System Plan for anticipated improvements, but it's clear that further study is needed.

Alternatives Under Consideration

The project team is considering several possible alternatives to solve this problem:

- 1. Move the highway corridor.** This would also require that the ferry terminal be relocated. While this is an expensive alternative, it would enable WSDOT to construct the necessary highway and holding area improvements that would allow the corridor and the ferry terminal to function effectively. This would also free up the existing corridor for the bike and pedestrian improvements that could more effectively link the downtown core area with the city's waterfront.
- 2. Rehabilitate the existing highway and holding area.** This is a lower-cost alternative. It would require that the holding area be expanded significantly and that a system of pedestrian overpasses be constructed to link the area with downtown, provide safe passage to the waterfront, and create the downtown-waterfront link that is vital for the city's long-term economic success.
- 3. Make a series of local improvements.** The City of Ecotopia could modify operational characteristics or close some existing roadways and construct other improvements that could also work to alleviate congestion in the area.

How Project Success Will Be Defined

The Ecotopia terminal-corridor alignment project will only be deemed successful if the following project goals are achieved:

- Provide sufficient capacity for the ferry terminal and state highway, so that vehicular growth can be accommodated through 2050.
- Provide for the safety of motorists who are both traveling to and waiting at the ferry terminal including appropriate lane designations, crossing aids, and services.
- Decrease current levels of carbon monoxide to levels that are safe for the health and well-being of Ecotopia's residents.
- Provide for an effective, economically-viable link between the downtown core and the city's waterfront including safe pedestrian and bicycle access across the highway corridor and the railroad tracks, pleasing landscaping that effectively draws the visitor between both of these areas, and signage and other aids that enable the visitor to readily navigate between both areas of the city.

These evaluation elements should be assembled into the team agreement (*Figure 8*), and your team should evaluate itself according to this document every six months. The purpose of this six-month evaluation is to determine, together, how well your team is working and to make any necessary adjustments to improve the work of the team. At the end of the project, another evaluation should occur: this is the time at which you will measure your overall success as a working team, as well as the overall success of the project.

photo Janice Flagan, Skagit County Public Works



▲ The Rainbow Bridge, in Skagit County, was painted a bright red-orange color to meet the wishes of the local community. In addition to federal bridge (BRAC) funds, the project also received BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) matching funds as a result of its connection to the north with the Swinomish Tribal Reservation. The orange colored bridge is a tourist attraction and has been incorporated into the Skagit County logo. The bridge is referred to locally as the Rainbow Bridge. This is due to the unique combination of its arch shape, bright orange color, and surrounding colors of the landscape.

Meeting One *Laying It All Out on the Table*

Meeting Two *Refining Your Project Vision*

Meeting Three *Signing Off on the Nitty Gritty*

Between meetings two and three, ask the facilitator or project lead to draft your team agreement and get it out to everyone for review. At this third meeting, the agreement should be in its final form and ready to be signed by all of the project team members. Everyone on the team should be present to sign the document together and to be serious about what you are signing. This not only helps affirm team members' commitment to the success of the project, but in case of staff or political leadership turnover helps subsequent team members or decision makers understand what has already been agreed to.

At this third meeting, you should also prepare the project decision guidelines. Or, if you are not there yet, you need to schedule the time necessary to prepare guidelines that are acceptable to the full team. These guidelines will accompany all review and approval documents throughout the design and environmental documentation process. A copy of the project development Guidelines is provided in *Figure 10*. It is also very beneficial to attach the accepted design concepts prepared by the project architect in meeting two.

The purpose of the project decision guidelines is two-fold. First, they help to initiate the difficult decisions the project team must make so that the design meets the project objectives. Second, they will be used to provide the big picture, the project purpose, and overall guidance to project reviewers who may not be familiar with all the complexities of your project. Ultimately, you want to minimize the redesign cycles that delay projects. By attaching these guidelines to your project documents, you help to ensure that deci-

Community Partnership Projects Project Decision Guidelines

Project Name: _____ Job Number: _____
Project Lead (Name, Agency): _____ Phone: _____
(Title, Department): _____ E-mail: _____
WSDOT Project Lead: _____ Phone: _____
(Title, Department): _____ E-mail: _____

I. Project Background

Briefly describe how this project was initiated and the general scope of the project.

II. Funding Partners

Identify funding partners, source, amount, and any time constraints related to grant expenditures.

1. Partner: _____ Funding Source: _____ Time: _____ Amount: _____
2. Partner: _____ Funding Source: _____ Time: _____ Amount: _____
3. Partner: _____ Funding Source: _____ Time: _____ Amount: _____
4. Partner: _____ Funding Source: _____ Time: _____ Amount: _____
Unfunded Amount: _____
Total: _____

III. Measures of Success

Identify primary project objectives, as developed by the project partners, and identify the measures of success. Examples are: crash reduction, congestion relief, transit travel time improvements, environmental enhancements, and community development.

IV. Critical Design Issues

Identify design requirements and access issues for each roadway segment WSDOT has jurisdictional control over for all projects, including considerations for deviations. Describe the intent of design selections.

Attach design concepts prepared by the project team's architect or team members.

V. Level of Service

Identify Level of Service Standards for each roadway segment with jurisdictional control. Describe non-motorized and transit needs. For example: walking distances, school bus stops, and transit speed and reliability.

VI. Project Development Process

Identify project development process

VII. Project Review

Describe major project constraints or challenges that a reviewer should recognize during the review of project elements.

Attach these Project Development Guidelines to the top of the project file, so that it is clearly visible to all offices reviewing your documents.

sions won't be second-guessed by others in the approval process. The guidelines will also assist in making certain that decisions can stick even as staff members change and political winds shift.

**Pay attention to who
is on your team and
commit yourself to being
accountable to them.
Chances are you are going to
be working together
for quite a while.**

Your project description may be ready to go, and in that case you should spend the time at this meeting detailing your next steps, project schedule, key milestones, and assigned duties to meet those milestones.

It's true that these early meetings will take some time and money, and you may be skeptical that they are really worth the investment. They are vitally important, however, in establishing a framework for a strong project team. If you've done these meetings right, you truly will have set the stage for your team's success on the project and will help prevent design "re-do's" down the road which can be costly.

photo Shane Young



▲ Downtown Walla Walla.

Need more help?

WSDOT has a training program called Managing Project Delivery that is an excellent tool for establishing and maintaining strong communication on your project team. For more information, contact: Project Development Training at 360.705.7261 or on-line at www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/design/destrng/newdestrng.htm.

An excellent resource to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life is the *Community Impact Assessment, a Quick Reference for Transportation Professionals*, Federal Highway Administration publication number FHWA-PD-96-036 or view it on-line at WSDOT's Community Resource Center: www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/PAandI/CommPart/

Engage the Public in Your Project

Transportation projects with any kind of visibility or community impact are likely to capture the attention of a broad range of interested citizens. Whether they are a business association or coalition, community clubs, environmental activists, tribal members, trucking coalitions, railroad operators, or bicycle advocacy organizations—your transportation project may have impacts and benefits that serve as an impetus for their involvement in your effort. These entities can make or break your projects if not actively engaged.

As a project team, you need to anticipate this interest and develop a solid plan for engaging the public in your project. It is important to reach out to the underserved segments of the population. Example may include transit riders, minorities, pupil transportation coordinators, or low-income community members. Early, frequent, and effective public involvement will allow your team to:

- **Meet the commitments of adopted comprehensive plans.** The key here is for local, regional, or even state agencies to meet short and long-term planning goals. These may include 6–30-year transportation plans, neighborhood and local comprehensive plans, state growth management scenic corridor plans, and maybe even environmental

goals. Consistency with and respect for these goals will build trust with the public.

- ▶ **Enable both WSDOT and local agencies to build stronger links with key public groups.** You're likely to be involved in long-term relationships with these groups, not only for this project but also for others in the future. There are a number of good reasons to be in touch with and responsive to as many interest groups as possible.
- ▶ **Work for no surprises.** You want to know what the issues are and how you can resolve them as early as possible in the process. An effective public involvement program will give you clear, early indication of how the project will ultimately be accepted and embraced by the public over the long-term.
- ▶ **Make for a better project.** Local communities have a lot to offer—ideas, values, creativity, and strategies for success. The public, local elected officials, and local agency staff will quickly disclose project constraints and opportunities. Listen. They can help you.

Of course, the extent and duration of your public involvement plan will depend on the size, complexity, and visibility of your project, but whatever the extent of your effort, you want to clearly understand how and when the public will be involved, and how they will ultimately influence the final project outcome.

To create your public involvement plan, your team should determine the following:

- **Goals for the public involvement effort.** What, specifically, do you hope to achieve with your public involvement effort? Provide information? Incorporate community values? Design to meet the needs of a specific user group? It's important to be clear about these.
- **Key stakeholders and customers.** Who is most likely to be engaged with you on this project, and what are their interests and motivations?
- **Level of influence. This is crucial.** You need to know from the beginning how the public will influence your planning and design for the project. Where are you open to public feedback, and what is not open for public feedback?

Are you designing, for example, to meet the needs of a specific community or user group? Then you probably want them to have the ultimate say-so in the project's design. Is public input important, but information needs to be balanced among a number of other interests and needs? Then create a process that makes it clear you are interested in comments, but that it is only one of a number of considerations. In other words, be honest up front on how much of the project will be driven by public feedback, where the ultimate decisions will be made, and which factors will contribute to those decisions.

How you deliver your messages is also important. While you want to be honest, you also want to communicate in a way that assures the community you are committed to a long-term, productive relationship with them. Just as you are creating partnerships on your project team, you want to be creating positive partnerships with the area's residents and businesses, as well.

Public Involvement Strategies. How are you going to inform and involve the public in your project? What are the specific tools and techniques you will be using?



Key Milestones and a Timeline for Action. Most projects lend themselves to key milestones, and it can be helpful to build your public involvement plan around them.

Common milestones are:

- Early planning and vision
- Discussion and narrowing of alternatives
- Final design and possible environmental analysis
- Communications during construction

Methods for Documentation. You want to make sure you have a solid plan for documenting what the public has told you and how you have used that feedback in the project. This track record of your listening, responsiveness, and use of comments is always an important tool for maintaining public support throughout the project.

What Strategies Should You Use?

- Printed materials
- Websites
- Workshops and public meetings
- Design charrettes
- Presentations to organized groups

Printed Materials. Virtually all projects benefit from fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, or other printed materials that both provide information and allow opportunities for feedback. These materials help to ensure that your overall schedule, goals, and other project information are in a handy reference spot.

Websites. These have grown more important over time. They allow for quick, easy access, and if you design them correctly they also provide the opportunity for people to comment via e-mail on your project.

Workshops and Public Meetings. These are likely to be the core of your public involvement effort. No matter how efficient we get in terms of electronic communication, face-to-face opportunities for the public to meet with the agency and

consulting team are invaluable for overall project success. Workshops in an open house format, for example, allow people to have the opportunity to talk about various aspects of the project in an informal setting, ask in-depth questions, and get to know the project staff. These are particularly effective at key milestones, when you have some information to share but want public feedback before proceeding to the next steps.

Design Charrettes. These are a fun and innovative way to engage the public, especially in projects where there is a significant landscape, streetscape, or other interesting design element. Design charrettes are public workshops that include community members, design professionals, and other project staff. Charrettes can take place in a single session or be spread out among two or three workshops. The goal of the charrette process is to capture the vision, values, and ideas of the community—with designers sketching to create alternatives and ideas as fast as they can be generated by the participants. Design charrettes are a good way to build positive enthusiasm and energy for your project and, at the same time, be responsive to the creativity of the community.

Presentations to Organized Groups. It's vitally important to "go where they are" when you have a project of any significance. Take time to attend a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, and neighborhood associations. Make the effort to go where people are already gathered, rather than making them come to you for their information. You will be viewed as being responsive and accessible, and you are also likely to get valuable information.

Should you have a citizens' committee? Some projects, especially those that involve a myriad of goals and priorities, can truly benefit from a citizen advisory committee or a project task force. For example, if you are redesigning a downtown core you will probably want focused feedback from business owners, bicycle advocates, and economic vitality interests. This can be a valuable group to use for feedback at major milestones. Just as you have with the overall public involvement program, however, you need to be clear on the role of this group, their level

photo Rita Robinson, DCTED



▲ By Boat or Train or Time Machine. Example of artwork incorporated into Wenatchee Multi-Modal Center.

of influence, operating ground rules, and specific tasks.

Implementation of the Public Involvement Plan

Once your plan is in place you can put it into action. The project team should act in an oversight role in how the plan is carried out. Likewise, it is important for team members to be accessible and visible to the local community. A team partnership—public agencies working together responsibly for the good of their constituencies—is a concept that is strongly supported by the general public, and it can be a positive and powerful message to support your project overall.

Need more help?

There are a number of resources available to assist with community visioning efforts. For more information, contact WSDOT's Community Economic Partnership Office at 360.705.7505 or visit them on-line at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/PAandI/CommPart/

The *Consensus Building Handbook* is a comprehensive compilation of principles and strategies for effective public involvement. Edited by Lawrence Susskind, SAGE publications, 1999.

The **Transportation Research Board's Committee on Public Involvement in Transportation** maintains an excellent website filled with ideas and techniques in use by practitioners, in all phases of transportation projects, and of new and innovative ways to engage the public in decision making. This website provides the transportation professional with tools to move away from the "decide, announce, defend" approach to collaborative and consensus-based approaches.

www.ch2m.com/TRB_PI/default.asp

The **FHWA's Innovations in Public Involvement for Transportation**, number FHWA-PD-94-021, is available by calling 800 760-NBPC, or 202 463-8405. This set of nine leaflets contains a series of practical techniques of public involvement. Each technique is explained, including its advantages and drawbacks, potential applications and special uses, utility to agencies and citizens, and resource requirements.

The **Institute of Cultural Affairs** in Seattle also offers training in group facilitation and public involvement. To access their website, go to: www.ica-usa.org